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**UNICEF Pakistan: Supporting
Lady Health Workers Program
A report prepared for UNICEF's Next
Generation**

November 2013

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Thank you for your generous support of UNICEF and the Lady Health Workers program in Pakistan. Your investment of \$89,000 helped the most marginalized and vulnerable women and children in Pakistan receive essential care and health education services. As a result of your support and UNICEF's work in Pakistan, over 2.8 million children have been reached by the Lady Health Workers program and thousands more are reaping the benefits of more informed parents. Thank you.

Overview

Women and children are among the most vulnerable populations in Pakistan. Women and children from the poorest households are routinely denied or otherwise discouraged from accessing healthcare and services. For those women and children living in rural or underserved areas, geography also poses a barrier to obtaining healthcare. In the province of Balochistan, Pakistan's largest province, low population density spread over an expansive landscape, combined with a lack of infrastructure and security, have contributed to frightening statistics for under-five and maternal mortality over the past two decades. In 2010 the under-five mortality rate was 89 per 1,000 live births and the maternal mortality rate was 758 per 100,000 live births. Both of these figures are considerably higher than the national average. The vast majority of these deaths are rooted in easily preventable or treatable causes such as pneumonia, diarrhea, measles and other life-threatening neonatal conditions.

Underlying factors that play into high child and maternal mortality rates can be traced back to low socioeconomic status, lack of education or awareness of parents about healthcare best practices and lack of adequate health infrastructure and services. The low status of women, frequent flooding, high illiteracy rates, inequitable income distribution and insufficient economic development exacerbates this already perilous situation for women and children in the Balochistan region. Many of the preventable causes of child and maternal mortality can be addressed through health education, access to care and information. However, in the region of Balochistan, where people live in rural communities, health centers and doctors are few and far between. UNICEF is working to change this and to create access to health providers and health information that has the capacity to prevent life threatening medical conditions and save lives.

UNICEF in Action

The National Program for Family Planning and Primarily Health Care, commonly known as the Lady Health Workers (LHW) Program is a high-impact, cost-efficient way to strengthen and expand the reach of an effective community based health care network in Pakistan. UNICEF is assisting provincial governments to keep the LHW program running, ensuring their essential services are available for poor children and women throughout the country. The LHW program is a network of some 100,000 LHWs working across Pakistan, providing educational and awareness raising services at the local level. LHWs go door-to-door in some of the most rural and underserved regions, including Balochistan, providing information about family planning, immunization, maternal care practices and antenatal care. Each LHW serves approximately 100 households who had no prior access to essential health and nutrition services. Additionally, LHWs provided vital links to health and nutrition services following floods in 2010 and 2011. UNICEF is working with the LHW at the provincial level, providing resources and support where provincial governments lack capacity, to ensure continuity of service.

Another key component of the LHW program is the two annual Mother and Child Weeks (MCW) organized by LHWs. MCW is a multi-intervention approach incorporating immunization, de-worming, breastfeeding promotion and control of pneumonia and diarrhea for pregnant women, mothers, and children twice a year. MCW also provides capacity enhancement for regular health services: health workers receive training and essential supplies such as antibiotics and oral rehydration salts are distributed. Because the delivery of these services is via the existing health system and LHWs, the cost for outreach is low and the program is highly sustainable.

Thanks to a significant investment by Next Generation, UNICEF was able to achieve the following in Balochistan, Sindh (another targeted province) and at the federal level:

- De-worming tablets were provided to over 2 million children 2-5 years of age;
- LHWs worked with communities to deliver behavior change communications and health education to children and their parents;
- MCW planning activities and meetings took place, leading up to the two MCW weeks per year;
- Antibiotics were distributed for the treatment of pneumonia;
- Refresher trainings on counseling skills were administered for Lady Health Supervisors;
- Tetanus Toxoid (TT) vaccinations were provided during MCW weeks;
- Lady Health Workers' kits, which include essential medicines and basic medical equipment, were provided to the LHW Program for continuation of maternal newborn and child health services;

- Monitoring of MCW's took place to maintain quality assurance.
- The above services contributed towards achieving the following objectives:
- Reduce infant morbidity and mortality by improving child immunization against vaccine preventable diseases;
- Reduce occurrence of anemia and diarrhea among preschool children by deworming against helminthic infections; and
- Improve health and development of children by awareness-raising in the community on improved hygiene and sanitation practices.

The Impact of Your Support

The transformational gift from UNICEF's Next Generation was invested in the LHW program in Pakistan, enabling the program to continue reaching women and children in remote areas of Balochistan. Below are some of the key activities your contribution has made possible:

2009-2010

- A total of 1,265,920 children benefited from the support of the LHW program in Pakistan, whether through de-worming or behavior change communication and health education; and
- Approximately 28,000 packs of de-worming tablets were distributed, reaching 2.8 million children 2-5 years of age.

The chart below provides an overview of the percentage of women reached by interventions in the targeted regions (Balochistan and Sindh) in 2009-2010:

Indicator	%
% of mothers who had heard about last MCW	74
% of de-worming among children 2-5 years	86
% coverage of immunization 0-23 month old	82
% coverage of TT among pregnant women	68
% of mothers who can identify two signs of pneumonia	67
% of mothers who can tell that a child suffering from pneumonia should be taken to qualified health worker or physician	76
% of mothers attending a Health Education session during the week	70
% of mothers who are aware of the importance of personal hygiene	85

2011

- During MCW in November 2011, 23,050 pregnant women received Tetanus Toxoid (TT) vaccinations, 300,353 children 2-5 years of age were given deworming tables and 23,362 were vaccinated;

- 2,154 Lady Health Workers' kits were provided, which include essential medicines and basic medical equipment, to the LHW Program for continuation of maternal newborn and child health services in Sind province (this area was extremely affected by monsoon floods in August 2011); and
- A total of 215,400 mothers and children were reached by 2,154 Lady Health workers through the provision of LHW kits in worst affected districts in the aftermath of 2011 monsoon floods in Sindh.

The chart below provides an overview of the percentage of women and children reached by interventions in the targeted regions (Balochistan and Sindh) in 2011:

Indicator	%
% of de-worming among children 2-5 years	100
% coverage of immunization among 0-23 month olds	124
% coverage of TT among pregnant women	86
% of mothers attending a Health Education session during the week	58

Expression of Thanks

Thank you for your investment in the children and women of Pakistan. This support has allowed UNICEF to work in partnership with the Government of Pakistan's Lady Health Worker program towards reducing mortality of children and women. With your support, UNICEF and the government of Pakistan are helping to give women and children unprecedented access to healthcare in some of the most remote parts of the country. UNICEF is working towards a sustainable solution to ensure no child dies of a preventable or treatable cause.



Four-year-old Aziza receives a dose of oral polio vaccine from Lady Health Worker Gul Bano, in flood-affected Sono Solangi Village in Kharpur District in Sindh Province. Aziza's mother and two younger children are behind them. Health workers are vaccinating all children under age five in the village, part of the September 2012 polio National Immunization Days (NIDs).

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Next Generation's investment in the LHW program has done more than distribute antibiotics and vaccines – it has helped to create a healthy foundation for every child and family this program reaches.

UNICEF is committed to providing children and communities with the tools they need to lead healthy and productive lives, free from the threat of curable illness. With your help, UNICEF is working to making this a reality in the lives of the children of Pakistan.

On behalf of the children of Pakistan, thank you for your support.



Pakistan, 2012. Amina, a lady health worker conducts a health hygiene session for a group of women and children in Whid Dino Notiar village in Badin district, Sindh Province. UNICEF-supported temporary pit latrines, hand pumps, and Hygiene kits and conduct hygiene session for all the flood affected families in this village.

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